

### Summary of the Preacher's Main Points So Far:

1. **The Whole of Life is *vanity* – a mere breath in which none of our personal accomplishments or legacies will survive or be remembered** (Ecclesiastes 1).
2. **Even those specific things that are precious to us, that we hold onto so tightly and invest so much in, also have little or no lasting satisfaction** (Ecclesiastes 2).
3. **Life is not about struggling to gain; but rather letting go, and learning to simply receive and enjoy life as a gift -- accepting this is the beginning of true Joy, Hope, and Freedom** (Ecclesiastes 3).
4. **A) Making life about "ME" is the source of most pain.**  
**B) Making life about others -- you will find true joy and contentment that cannot be matched elsewhere under the sun** (Ecclesiastes 4).
5. **Religion, like any other pursuit, is vanity if approached for personal gain, rather than as a platform for giving** (Ecclesiastes 5).
6. **Don't try to control your life, or you will suffer the tragedy of never finding contentment** (Ecclesiastes 6).
7. **Let Death be your teacher and learn to live life backwards and choose wisdom over escapism; but know that even wisdom is limited** (Ecclesiastes 7).

Despite the Vanity of Life, Wisdom Does Have Significance, and Teaches Us Truth that has Eternal Value.

#### Ecclesiastes 8:1

How wonderful to be wise, to analyze and interpret things.

Wisdom lights up a person's face, softening its harshness.

### Learning Obedience

#### Ecclesiastes 8:2-8

**2 Obey the king since you vowed to God that you would. 3 Don't try to avoid doing your duty, and don't stand with those who plot evil, for the king can do whatever he wants. 4 His command is backed by great power. No one can resist or question it. 5 Those who obey him will not be punished.** Those who are wise will find a time and a way to do what is right, **6 for there is a time and a way for everything, even when a person is in trouble.**

**7 Indeed, how can people avoid what they don't know is going to happen? 8 None of us can hold back our spirit from departing. None of us has the power to prevent the day of our death. There is no escaping that obligation, that dark battle. And in the face of death, wickedness will certainly not rescue the wicked.**

## 1 Peter 2:18

You who are slaves must **submit to your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel.** <sup>19</sup> For **God is pleased** when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment.<sup>20</sup> Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, **God is pleased with you.**

- Why does this “please God”?
  - How does Obedience Have Lasting Value “Beyond Life Under the Sun”?
- Learning to Respect Authority

## Romans 13:1-2

Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. <sup>2</sup> So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.

- Elders, Parents, Human institutions... (see 1 Peter 5:5; Eph. 6:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13)
- Even, and perhaps, especially those that are unjust...

- A Witness to the Oppressor and to the Spectator

## Matthew 5:39-41

I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. <sup>40</sup> If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. <sup>41</sup> If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles.

*Once Gandhi, while a young man studying in South Africa, and at the time considered becoming, a Christian was in a conversation with Reverend Charles Andrews an Anglican missionary. Some tough members of a gang approached them. Andrews takes one look at the young thugs and starts to run, but Gandhi held his arm and said, “Doesn’t the New Testament say that if your enemy strikes you on the right cheek you are offer him your left?” Andrews explained that Jesus used that phrase metaphorically. “I’m not so sure,” Gandhi replied. “I suspect he meant you should show courage to take a blow, several blows, to show you will not strike back nor will you be turned aside. And when you do that it calls on something in human nature, something that makes his hatred decrease and his respect increase. I think Christ grasped that and I have seen it work.”*

- Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*

## Romans 12:17-21

<sup>17</sup> Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. <sup>18</sup> Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.<sup>19</sup> Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. **In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.**” <sup>21</sup> Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

## Choosing What's Right Even When It Seems To Make No Difference

### Ecclesiastes 8:9-14

<sup>9</sup> I have thought deeply about all that goes on here under the sun, where people have the power to hurt each other. <sup>10</sup> I have seen wicked people buried with honor. Yet they were the very ones who frequented the Temple and are now praised in the same city where they committed their crimes! This, too, is meaningless. <sup>11</sup> When a crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong. <sup>12</sup> But even though a person sins a hundred times and still lives a long time, **I know that those who fear God will be better off.** <sup>13</sup> The wicked will not prosper, for they do not fear God. Their days will never grow long like the evening shadows.

<sup>14</sup> And this is not all that is meaningless in our world. In this life, **good people are often treated as though they were wicked, and wicked people are often treated as though they were good. This too is vanity!**

- The growing implication that there is something beyond “Life Under the Sun...”